



STUDENT ANTI-APARTHEID NEWSLETTER

American Committee On Africa

198 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10038 / (212) 962-1210 / Cable AMCOMMAF

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Anti-Apartheid Protests Sweep Campuses Across the Country --Further Municipal Divestment Victories Registered

This spring has been marked by an unprecedented growth in the breadth and militancy of student protests for South Africa-related divestment. Beginning with protests on March 21, Sharpeville Day, and sparked by the Columbia University blockade on April 4 National Divestment Protest Day, students at over 100 campuses have taken part in anti-apartheid actions.

In addition to Columbia, blockades, occupations and sit-ins of some form have occurred at UC/Berkeley, Rutgers, Cornell (where over 1000 people have been arrested), Tufts, Harvard, Louisville, University of Wisconsin, Oberlin, University of Iowa, UMASS/Amherst, UCLA, State University of New York, Vassar and UC/Santa Cruz. Within five days a national anti-apartheid day on April 24 was organized involving over 70 campuses and the protests received front-page coverage in the New York Times and numerous other publications.

In the wake of these protests, the momentum for divestment of institutional stocks from U.S. corporations and banks involved in South Africa has picked up. On Friday April 26, while 250 students were protesting on campus, the Dartmouth College trustees undertook their first divestment action after 8 years of protests as they voted to sell several million dollars worth of stock in Kimberly-Clarke Corporation and Republic Bank. On April 30 the San Francisco Retirement Board voted 5-2 to divest \$335 million in city pension funds from U.S. corporations and banks involved in South Africa--a policy to be implemented within two years. The San Francisco decision followed a non-binding voter referendum in November and came at a time of militant student protest throughout the University of California system. That same day the city of Burlington, Vermont decided to divest all \$1.8 million in city pension funds in South Africa-linked companies.

What has helped sustain student protests is that the divestment of school funds has not been seen as an end in itself but rather a means to discourage U.S. corporate investment in South Africa. The protests themselves (whether the school takes any action) have succeeded in further discouraging such corporate investment. As John Chettle of the South Africa Foundation, an ardent foe of divestment, admitted in the Financial Mail (February 1, 1985):

"In one respect at least, the divestment forces have already won. They have prevented--discouraged, dissuaded whatever you call it--billions of dollars of new U.S. investment in South Africa."

SUMMARY OF CAMPUS PROTEST ACTIONS

Columbia University

On April 4, national divestment protest day, 300 students marched from a protest rally to Hamilton Hall where chains were placed on the front doors and a three week blockade began for divestment of Columbia's \$32.5 million in South Africa-related holdings. The protest began 10 days after 7 members of the Coalition for a Free South Africa started a hunger strike and three days after the University Trustees had refused to even discuss the divestment issue.

For 21 days the steps of the renamed Mandela Hall became the site for an unprecedented alliance of student, community and labor groups highlighted by a city-wide march of 2000 people to the Columbia campus in support of divestment. The protest sparked militant campus protests across the country and built momentum for the successful April Actions for Peace, Jobs and Justice (April 19-22) which attracted 75,000 people to Washington DC and 60,000 to San Francisco.

The blockade paralleled the 1968 Columbia Revolt in that both underscored the undemocratic corporate structure of the university and its divorce from student and community opinion. What distinguished the 1985 blockade was the supportive mobilization by the major trade unions in New York City including: District 65 of the UAW (which won a bitter representation battle at Columbia), District 37 (municipal workers union), Teamsters Local 237, AFSCME Local 402, and 1199. These unions have been major backers of state and city divestment legislation, including a phased divestment plan affecting \$665 million in NYC. In the course of their struggle the Columbia students were backed by Bishop Desmond Tutu, the United Democratic Front, the ANC, SWAPO, the Chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid, ACOA, TransAfrica, and Jesse Jackson who spoke at the blockade site. Many local political and community leaders also gave their support including: City Council member Ruth Messinger, Bella Abzug, Reverend Herbert Daughtry, US Rep Charles Rangel, Assemblyman Arthur Eve, Reverend Calvin Butts, Vernon Mason, Elombe Brath, Rev Wyatt T. Walker and others.

In order to escalate their struggle the Columbia Coalition for a Free South Africa decided to move the blockade on April 25 to other sites of protest. That evening, following a dramatic rally in which the chains were cut from the doors of Mandela Hall, 1000 people marched from Columbia University into the Harlem community to join an important community meeting at the Canaan Baptist Church. As the students streamed into the church, community residents sang chorus after chorus of "Glory Halleluah". This first ever march from Columbia to Harlem underscored the students' commitment to combat racism at home, and the potential for an alliance against Columbia's slumlord practices.

The very next day 55 students were arrested for blockading the Park Avenue office building where Columbia Trustee Board Chairman Samuel Higginbottom works. The Coalition continued the pressure with a protest at the May 6 meeting of the Trustees on campus, as a prelude to an action at the May 15th commencement exercises.

Washington DC

On April 4, following a rally at George Washington University, students from American University, University of Maryland, University of the District of Columbia, Howard and Georgetown staged a "funeral march" to the South African Embassy and joined a protest of 4000 municipal workers in commemoration of Martin Luther King (who was killed on that day).

The House Foreign Relations Committee voted 29-6 on May 2 to back a major bill that would bar new private U.S. investment in South Africa, Krugerrand sales in the U.S., computer exports to South Africa and loans to the SA Government.

California

On April 10 students at Berkeley began a blockade of Sproul (renamed Biko) Hall demanding divestment of the University of California's \$1.7 billion in South Africa-linked holdings. In December 1984 38 people had been arrested at a divestment protest, and since April 16 more than 400 arrests have occurred. The arrests by riot-equipped police have sparked class boycotts and rallies of over 5000 people including an additional blockade of University Hall. At this site among those arrested have been Berkeley Mayor Gus Newport, the Alameda County Supervisor, Oakland City Council member Wilson Riles, and numerous union members of AFSCME and the International Longshoremen's Union. The Berkeley Student Government has also voted to terminate all supply contracts between student union stores and computer and electronics firms with links to South Africa. This action resulted in the cancellation of contracts worth \$3.4 million with IBM and Hewlett Packard.

Following Berkeley's lead, protests have occurred at all nine schools of the University of California system--notably at UCLA where 25 students were arrested in conjunction with a sit-in and rally of over 2000 people on the April 24 National Protest Day. Activists at UC/Santa Cruz have played an important role in coordinating actions from their headquarters in Mandela Library and at UC/Santa Barbara 1400 students surrounded the Administration Building on April 24 to protest South Africa-linked investments. At Stanford University on the 24th a noon rally drew 1000 people and was followed by a sit-out that involved 250 protesters overnight. Other actions have taken place at Hastings Law School, San Francisco State College, Los Angeles Community College, San Jose State, Cal State/Northridge and on May 16-17 students from all University of California schools will converge for a protest at Berkeley where the Regents will be meeting.

Northeastern Region

At Cornell University (Ithaca NY) over the past two weeks more than 1000 people have been arrested in ongoing sit-ins at the main administration building. On May 1 the Faculty voted 323 -72 for Cornell to fully divest its \$100 million in South Africa linked holdings.

At Rutgers/New Brunswick there has been a blockade of the student center for nearly three weeks and large support rallies, including one with Jesse Jackson of 5000 people. In the face of student pressure, the university had sold \$7 million in South Africa-linked holdings between February and April, and the blockaders are demanding that they sell off the remaining \$6 million in holdings.

In Albany on April 24, 27 students from state university campuses were arrested at the business office of the New York State University system, after the Regents had voted down a divestment proposal that day. Protests have also taken place at state university campuses in Stonybrook, Purchase, New Paltz, and Binghamton.

48 students occupied the Harvard Corporation headquarters for eight hours on April 24 in a divestment action, and on May 2 200 students barricaded the door of a campus room where South African Consul Abe Hoppenstein was speaking. One protester commented: "We want to demonstrate the parallel with Black South Africans who are imprisoned by officials, to give him a taste of what it is like." In Western Massachusetts, several hundred students at UMASS/Amherst occupied the Administration Building from April 1-4 demanding that the school implement a 1977 divestment policy. In order to ensure swift implementation the students reoccupied the Treasurer's office April 30 and 27 people were arrested. At Tufts University over 150 students occupied the administration building for 3 days demanding divestment, and Princeton has been the site of an encampment for two weeks. At Yale following a rally of 350 students on May 1 a 24-hour sit-out was held and protests have also taken place at UPENN, Wesleyan, Bryn Mawr & Swarthmore.

Southern Region

Protest actions for divestment, some involving civil disobedience, have been spreading all across the southern United States.

At the University of Florida in Gainesville protesters chained shut the doors of Tiggert (renamed Mandela) Hall on April 24 and began a blockade. On April 25, 27 students were arrested and since then the blockaders have returned and plan to remain through the summer.

In Atlanta on April 29 nine people were arrested outside the National shareholder's meeting of IBM for refusing to move their protest, and at Georgia State University a student referendum for divestment passed by 70% April 24.

At the University of Louisville, 100 students staged a 24-hour occupation of the campus information center in conjunction with the April 24 National Protest Day and a rally was held that day at the University of Kentucky/Lexington.

In Nashville (TN) students at Vanderbilt University achieved a major victory when their threatened civil disobedience action at a shareholder meeting sparked the Service Merchandisers Company to announce a halt to all sales of the Krugerrand, South Africa's gold coin in late April.

Students Against Apartheid, based on the Tuscon campus of the University of Arizona, rallied for divestment on the National Protest Day and there have also been actions at the University of New Mexico, St Mary's College in Maryland, Louisiana State University, Chapel Hill (North Carolina) and Duke University.

Midwestern Region

On April 24 hundreds of students marched from the University of Wisconsin campus in Madison and occupied the state capitol rotunda, where several hundred remain demanding that the state legislature pass divestment legislation.

On May 1 at the University of Iowa in Iowa City about 200 students occupied the main administration building overnight, before police arrested 137 protesters the next day. An outdoor blockade of the building continues with daily rallies.

At the University of Missouri a student coalition spearheaded by students at the St Louis and Columbia campuses has held divestment protests of several hundred people, including one at the May 2 meeting of the University Regents. Protests will take place on all four university campuses at commencement exercises.

Kansas University has been the site of divestment rallies since April 24, and at Oberlin (Ohio) a rally of 350 students led to a sit-in at the Administration building on that day. Protests have also occurred in Detroit (where protests marches against Ford and General Motors occurred March 21, 28 and April 4), Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois at Circle and Urbana.
**On May 3 the Grinnell College Trustees (Iowa) voted to divest \$9 million in holdings.

Northwestern Region

In early 1985 Western Washington University (with a divestment of several million dollars) and Evergreen State College (also in Washington state) became the 12th and 13th U.S. schools to totally divest stockholdings in companies and banks involved in South Africa.

In Eugene at the University of Oregon about 60 persons were arrested May 2 (a day on which over 200 arrests occurred nationwide in divestment protests). In Portland (OR) protest actions forced the South African honorary consul to resign and a major march against apartheid and racism was held on April 6. Divestment rallies have also been held at Reed and Willamette Colleges.



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ACTION TIME-LINE FOR ANTI-APARTHEID ORGANIZING SET BY STUDENT ACTIVISTS FOLLOWING HEARING AT THE UNITED NATIONS

On May 7 the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid held a hearing involving student activists from the most active campuses nationwide including:

Columbia University (3-week blockade and 60 arrests), UC/Berkeley (400 arrested in divestment protests), University of Wisconsin/Madison (ongoing occupation of the state capitol), University of Iowa (137 arrests), Cornell University (over 1000 arrests), University of Louisville (sit-in of 100 students), Rutgers/New Brunswick (three week building blockade), UCLA (25 arrests), Atlanta (9 arrests), Harvard (blockade of the South African consul), Yale (sit-out), UC/Santa Cruz, Princeton (2-week encampment), and the University of Texas.

Following the hearing in a meeting coordinated by the American Committee on Africa campus organizers decided on a general time-line for action into next school year:

COMMENCEMENT PROTESTS TO BE HELD NATIONWIDE

Protests for divestment are being planned by groups across the country and in some places opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America will also be a focus. The May 7th meeting decided that to highlight the national character of the protests that several coordinating steps be taken:

- 1) That all groups nationwide encourage the wearing of black armbands by participants and guests at commencement to show support for divestment.
- 2) That where possible press conferences be held May 15 to announce in a coordinated manner commencement plans. It was mentioned that Columbia University is having commencement that day and that might be one occasion for such a conference. A major protest in conjunction with a regents meeting at Berkeley on May 16-17 might also make the 15th a good date there. Other groups, particularly in major regional centers like Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit or elsewhere might try to pull one together.

OCTOBER 11, 1985 TO BE A NATIONAL ANTI-APARTHEID PROTEST DAY

On Southern Africa Political Prisoner day another national anti-apartheid protest day with a stress on divestment (as on April 4 and April 24) was decided upon. A number of themes and ideas were agreed upon:

- 1) That organizing on that day make a consistent link between political prisoner campaigns and the divestment focus.
- 2) That a call be put out to overseas, particularly student groups, to make this an international protest day.
- 3) That the political prisoner focus be expanded to include people under banning orders, notably Winnie Mandela.
- 4) The political prisoner bracelet campaign be promoted (contact: Tandi Gcabashe, AFSC, 92 Piedmont Ave NE Atlanta GA 30303)
- 5) We enlist the support of Amnesty International in this day as well as getting prominent endorsers for the day as soon as possible.

NATIONAL ANTI-APARTHEID STUDENT CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER IN NEW YORK CITY

In order to follow up on the October 11 action a mass conference would be held to build momentum for the Spring (annual weeks of action to be held March 21-April 6) and to bring in new students and community people.

REGIONAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD OVER THE SUMMER

As part of sustaining the movement over the summer to build for the Fall, regional meetings (some in June) will be held.

The American Committee on Africa will host a Northeast regional meeting on Saturday June 15 at 198 Broadway (rm 402) from noon-5PM. For info: 212-962-1210. For those who come for that meeting we encourage you to stay over for Soweto Sunday June 16 when the African National Congress will be organizing a major rally.

SUMMER STUDENT PROJECT TO SUPPORT NATIONAL DISINVESTMENT LEGISLATION

This summer the Free South Africa Movement will hire 25 students from June 1-Aug 31 to do targeted organizing on "swing" U.S. Representatives and Senators on the important legislation for South Africa sanctions. Stipends are \$200/week and you must immediately call Damu Smith or Kay Shaw at 202-232-5690 to be considered. An initial meeting will take place May 14 in Wash DC from 1:30-4PM in the Cannon Caucus Rm (Rm 345 of Cannon House Office Bldg NJ and Indep Aves Wash DC)